



Taxicab Service – Impact on Visitors

For many years, the hospitality industry in Wichita has discussed how to address issues related to taxicab service in Wichita. As the trip from the airport to a hotel in a taxi is often a visitor's first experience of our city, a pleasant, friendly, hassle-free taxicab ride can certainly ensure the visitor's first impression of Wichita is positive.

Our hotels and Go Wichita have received feedback from customers on taxicab experiences they have had which do not reflect well on our city. Some of the issues which have been cited include:

- Taxi appearance (vehicle quality and interior cleanliness, including smoking odor)
- Driver appearance and dress
- Driver courtesy and professionalism
- Inconsistent fares which penalize short rides
- Refusal of service (especially for short fares to/from airport)
- Lack of adequate taxis at airport at peak times

To ensure visitors' first impressions of Wichita are great, we are very supportive of customer service training for Wichita taxicab drivers. While the customer service training would be mandatory on a bi-annual basis, we agree with the City Manager's office that this training should be cost-free to the drivers.

Go Wichita currently offers Hospitality Training, and is willing to design a course that is specifically targeted to taxi operators. The curriculum would include customer service skills, as well as information on Wichita, its attractions and answers to questions that visitors often have. Ongoing communication from Go Wichita to the drivers would keep them up-to-date on current events and recommendations in the city as well. We would seek to build a long-term relationship with the drivers, acting as a resource for them and providing them with current information. For example, we currently send a weekly "This Week in Wichita" email to hotels and corporate HR departments and would start to send this via email or text to the drivers' cell phones to inform them about current events in the city.

Here are some items we would incorporate into taxicab customer service training:

1. Know the three key criteria that customers use to evaluate "good service":
 - People
 - Time
 - Appearance
2. Acknowledge your customers - treat them with respect. Show them Wichita is a friendly city.
3. Cleanliness/Atmosphere - focus on first impressions.
4. Competency - know the city and know routes to major hotels and/or have GPS in the cab.
5. Knowledge - become familiar with resources that are available for out of town guest and locals.
6. Ensure the ride is hassle-free (e.g. is your credit card machine is working?).

Go Wichita and the hospitality industry appreciate the collaboration between City staff, the taxicab owners and the many stakeholders who have worked to make the changes to the taxicab ordinances, and are fully supportive of the recommended improvements.